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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/989,530	11/21/2001	Syuji Nakai	011900-315	9950

7590

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Platon N. Mandros
BURNS, DOANE, SWECKER & MATHIS, L.L.P.
P.O. Box 1404
Alexandria, VA 22313-1404

EXAMINER

YEE, DEBORAH

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1742

DATE MAILED: 01/24/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

AS3

Office Action Summary

Application N .

09/989,530

Applicant(s)

NAKAI ET AL.

Examiner

Deborah Yee

Art Unit

1742

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____ .
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1 to 34 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 27 to 34 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1 to 26 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____ .
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 4 .
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). ____ .
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: ____ .

DETAILED ACTION

Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:

- I. Claims 1 to 26, drawn to ultra-low carbon steel alloy composition, classified in class 148, subclass 320.
- II. Claims 27 to 34, drawn to a method of refining in a converter, continuous casting, rolling, and annealing, classified in class 148, subclass 540.

The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

Inventions of group II and group I are related as process of making and product made. The inventions are distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) that the process as claimed can be used to make other and materially different product or (2) that the product as claimed can be made by another and materially different process (MPEP § 806.05(f)). In the instant case the product as claimed can be made by RH vacuum refining treatment to control and reduce the number of inclusions, as evident by lines 4 to 10 on page 3 of applicant's specification.

Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art because of their recognized divergent subject matter, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

During a telephone conversation with Mr. Peter Skiff on January 14, 2003 a provisional election was made with traverse to prosecute the invention of group I, claims 1 to 26. Affirmation of this election must be made by applicant in replying to this Office action. Claims 27 to 34 are withdrawn from further consideration by the examiner, 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

Art Unit: 1742

Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1 to 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the English abstract of Japanese publication No. 2000144330A, Ito et al (US Patent No. 3,950,191), or Japanese patent 11-2791721 (which was submitted by applicant).

The English abstract of JP'330A, Ito et al. in Table 1 of columns 8 to 10, and the English abstract of JP'721, each teach an ultra -low carbon steel sheet which meets the claimed composition, and has an extremely low number of oxide inclusions . Even though prior art does not teach 20 or less inclusions in 60 fields under a microscope in a sample steel prepared in accordance with JIS G0555 as recited by the claim, such would not be a patentable difference since the technique of measuring is not the gist of the invention, and also the low number of 20 would be inherently suggested by prior art since similar to the present invention, the prior art desires and seeks to have extremely low numbers of inclusions in order to reduce surface defects, such as pin holes and

Art Unit: 1742

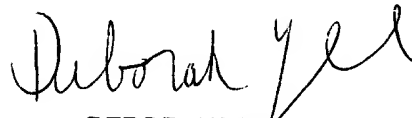
press cracks. In any event, the differences between prior art and present invention would amount to no more than routine optimization of non-metallic inclusions which is well within the skill of the art and productive of no new and unexpected results.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Deborah Yee whose telephone number is 703-308-1102. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 6:30 to 4:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Roy King can be reached on 703-308-1146. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-872-9310 for regular communications and 703-873-9311 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0661.

dy
January 15, 2003


DEBORAH YEE
PRIMARY EXAMINER